

providing a second type of metallic or semiconductor nanoparticles having oligonucleotides attached thereto, the oligonucleotides having a sequence complementary to a second portion of the sequence of the nucleic acid and being labeled with a fluorescent molecule;

contacting the nucleic acid with the two types of nanoparticles under conditions effective to allow hybridization of the oligonucleotides on the two types of nanoparticles with the nucleic acid; and

observing changes in fluorescence.

90. The method of Claim 89 further comprising placing a portion of the mixture of the nanoparticles and nucleic acid in an observation area located on a microporous material, treating the microporous material so as to remove any unbound nanoparticles from the observation area, and then observing the changes in fluorescence.

91. A method of detecting nucleic acid having at least two portions comprising:

providing a type of particle having oligonucleotides attached thereto, the oligonucleotides having a first portion and a second portion, both portions being complementary to portions of the sequence of the nucleic acid;

providing a type of probe oligonucleotides comprising a first portion and a second portion, the first portion having a sequence complementary to the first portion of the oligonucleotides attached to the particles and both portions being complementary to portions of the sequence of the nucleic acid, the probe oligonucleotides further being labeled with a reporter molecule at one end;

contacting the particle and the probe oligonucleotides under conditions effective to allow for hybridization of the oligonucleotides on the particles with the probe oligonucleotides to produce a satellite probe;

then contacting the satellite probe with the nucleic acid under conditions effective to provide for hybridization of the nucleic acid with the probe oligonucleotides;

removing the particles; and  
detecting the reporter molecule.

92. The method of Claim 91 wherein the particles are magnetic and the reporter molecule is a fluorescent molecule.

93. The method of Claim 91 wherein the particles are magnetic and the reporter molecule is a dye molecule.

94. The method of Claim 91 wherein the particles are magnetic and the reporter molecule is a redox-active molecule.

95. A kit comprising at least one container, the container holding a composition comprising at least two types of nanoparticles having oligonucleotides attached thereto, the oligonucleotides on the first type of nanoparticles having a sequence complementary to the sequence of a first portion of a nucleic acid, the oligonucleotides on the second type of nanoparticles having a sequence complementary to the sequence of a second portion of the nucleic acid.

96. The kit of Claim 95 wherein the composition in the container further comprises a filler oligonucleotide having a sequence complementary to a third portion of the nucleic acid, the third portion being located between the first and second portions.

97. The kit of Claim 95 wherein the nanoparticles are made of gold.

98. The kit of Claim 95 further comprising a solid surface.

99. A kit comprising at least two containers,

the first container holding nanoparticles having oligonucleotides attached thereto which have a sequence complementary to the sequence of a first portion of a nucleic acid, and

the second container holding nanoparticles having oligonucleotides attached thereto which have a sequence complementary to the sequence of a second portion of the nucleic acid.

100. The kit of Claim 99 comprising a third container holding oligonucleotides having a sequence complementary to a third portion of the nucleic acid, the third portion being located between the first and second portions.

101. The kit of Claim 99 wherein the nanoparticles are made of gold.

102. The kit of Claim 99 further comprising a solid surface.

103. A kit comprising at least two containers,

the first container holding nanoparticles having oligonucleotides attached thereto which have a sequence complementary to the sequence of a first portion of a binding oligonucleotide, and

the second container holding one or more types of binding oligonucleotides, each of which has a sequence comprising at least two portions, the first portion being complementary to the sequence of the oligonucleotides on the nanoparticles and the second portion being complementary to the sequence of a portion of a nucleic acid.

104. The kit of Claim 103 which comprises additional containers, each holding an additional binding oligonucleotide, each additional binding oligonucleotide having a sequence comprising at least two portions, the first portion being complementary to the